

VZCZCXYZ0016  
RR RUEHWEB

DE RUEHIN #0867 2010942  
ZNR UUUUU ZZH  
R 200942Z JUL 09  
FM AIT TAIPEI  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 1962  
INFO RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 9290  
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 0723

UNCLAS AIT TAIPEI 000867

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR INR/R/MR, EAP/TC, EAP/P, EAP/PD - NIDA EMMONS  
DEPARTMENT PASS AIT/WASHINGTON

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [OPRC](#) [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [TW](#)  
SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: AFGHANISTAN

Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused news coverage July 18-20 on the 2009 World Games, which began in Kaohsiung the evening of the 16th; on U.S. TV news legend Walter Cronkite, who passed away in New York last Friday; on the results of this year's university entrance exams in Taiwan; and on the celebration of the fortieth anniversary of the Apollo 11 moon landing on July 20. In terms of editorials and commentaries, a column in the pro-unification "United Daily News" discussed the recent incident in which a U.S. soldier was captured in Afghanistan.

The article questioned whether U.S. President Barack Obama has miscalculated regarding his plan to send more U.S. troops to Afghanistan. End summary.

"Obama Miscalculates [the Decision to] Augment Troops in Afghanistan?"

A column in the pro-unification "United Daily News" [circulation: 400,000] wrote (7/20):

"U.S. President Barack Obama, since taking over the helm, has made two major revisions to his strategic plans concerning the battlefields of Afghanistan and Iraq, respectively. He has placed a priority on the war in Afghanistan and continuously sent [more] U.S. troops to the country over the past few months. The 32,000 U.S. soldiers originally stationed in Afghanistan will be increased to 68,000 by the end of this year. Together with the 36,000 soldiers from other allies who are also stationed in Afghanistan, the move is aimed at securing a smooth presidential election in Afghanistan on August 20 and fighting a quick battle with the Taliban. But the recent military actions by the United States to suppress the Taliban have resulted in frequent injuries and deaths. The worst case was that of the first U.S. soldier to be captured since the United States sent troops to Afghanistan in 2001. ... It appears that Obama's [decision to] send more troops to Afghanistan will likely start with a bang and end with a fizzle. One of the reasons for such a failure is that [Washington] has failed to learn from the lesson of the former Soviet Union [in Afghanistan]."

WANG